

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force its 62 stations (many of which are in swing states) to preempt regular programming and air an anti-Kerry documentary just days before the election is a clear example of the dangers inherent in media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Unfortunately, Sinclair has shown--repeatedly--that it is more interested in promoting a particular political agenda than in using the airwaves responsibly. This is no trivial matter, as the Sinclair Broadcasting group reaches about a quarter of American households.

When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for their bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. No one company should have the power to dictate what is or is not shown on 62 stations from California to Maine. Sinclair's actions highlight why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They also show why the license renewal process ought to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you for your attention.